181
178 from the development of big industry, and economic motives have become more and more predominant in public life. As far as her constitutional or judicial system, public education or general welfare are concerned, Finland undoubtedly belongs among the most advanced nations in the world, and there should be little
[668] reason for social discontent. All the same, the number of Communists is considerable, and represents a potential threat to the peace of Finland.

●157 There is no doubt that the Finn is a born individualist and resents very much any outside interference. He is not apt to follow leaders, and anyone wishing to influence the Finnish public must have an extraordinarily strong personality. At any rate, it is wiser to appeal to his reason rather than to his emotions, for

157 by nature the Finn has a logical, matter-of-fact approach to problems. It is very difficult to influence the Finn by propaganda, but, on the other hand, an agitation appealing to the worst features in the Finnish character, those of envy and mistrust, can prove itself quite successful, as has been shown by the accomplishments of the Communists.

181 Their unyielding environment has forced the
●157 Finns to concentrate on the problem of acquiring daily bread, and this has contributed to the realistic strain in their character. At the same time, however, they show a keenly developed reverence for spiritual values, as demonstrated in the old poetry in which courage of conviction and idealism are valued higher than military
157 exploits. There exists a tendency to quiet meditation in the Finnish character, probably influenced by the forced loneliness of the wilderness which has been the home of the Finn for centuries. As a whole, the Finn is extremely reticent; he possesses little natural charm; and the sympathetic features in his character can be appreciated only after more intimate acquaintance. The best qualities in a Finn are

●157 his physical and moral strength: his great courage, persistence, reliability, and a genuine kindness and unexpected sense of humor hidden under an often grim exterior. He despises all pomp, any kind of outward show of emotion. The drawbacks to the Finnish character are a certain tendency to quarrel and to envy, and a violence that is unsuspected in such a calm-appearing people, commonly considered to be among the most humane and law-abiding in the world.

The basic personality trait of the Finn is his unbelievable stubbornness,which is a key to most of his good as well as his bad characteristics. With the help of it he has again and again overcome difficulties so great that others have adjudged them impossible to solve, and

157 because of it he has often indulged in petty quarrels and disputes. This stubbornness is called in Finnish sisu, a word which has no equivalent in any other language, and which can best be described by the words of Aleksis Kivi, the greatest of all Finnish writers: " 'Sisu' takes a man even through a grey stone!"

181 In spite of its fairly isolated position, Finland
105 has always been open to influence from abroad, and the Finns, while clinging to their traditional culture, have for a long time been ready and willing to accept new ideas. In this way they have created a civilization which is original in in the best sense of the word, at the same time making use of valuable elements of European civilization. The relatively high level of Finnish folk culture is due to the moral qualities

105 of the people and to their having early acquired
181 a high degree of civilization. The Finn has always wanted to think for himself, and the dominant note in Finnish society has always been liberty--slavery and serfdom have never existed
157 there. The Finn is decidedly individualistic,
[156] cherishing his traditional rights, but he has a reverence for his governmental and judicial systems in which he himself is an active party. He is not easily led astray by revolutionary doctrines, and seldom has he risen against the prevailing authority.

The Finn is not actually conservative--the modern character of present-day Finnish society and culture bears ample testimony to this--but he is suspicious of outside influence. Towards foreigners he is very hospitable--

157 although visitors are still rare in many Finnish homes--and a little bit amused at the same time. He has an aversion to propaganda of any kind and he takes too little notice of the wild rumors and totally erroneous interpretation of his country and his people that still are fairly common abroad. He also has a tendency towards excessive modesty and is ready to admire the achievements of other peoples, although in his heart he may be convinced that his own country is best. Polite phrases and flattering are alien to him, and he is apt to express his opinion openly and without any softening or adornment. But, on the other hand, his friendliness is heart-felt, and a Finn can hardly be offended by anything more than by a refusal of his profferred help or service. It is a Finnish tradition to treat any guest in one's home,

157 whoever he may be, with the utmost courtesy and hospitality, and, however busy one may be, it is always best to accept this hospitality gratefully and patiently. The Finns never seem to be in a hurry, and it is said--although this is an over-statement--that trains are the only thing on time in Finland.

The individualism of the Finn is partly due to the isolation in which he has lived for centuries. 361 The settlements have been sparse; even today many faraway houses are cut off from all connections with neighbors for some time every year. Nowhere in the rural areas in Finland can one meet crowded villages with streets and squares as in Central Europe. The farmhouses stand wide apart each on its own hill, surrounded by fields and pastures. Only around